

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated January 3, 2006. In the Office Action, claims 1-7 and 23-28 were rejected, claims 8-10 and 29-31 were objected to and claims 11-14 were withdrawn from consideration. With this Amendment, claims 1, 3 and 23 are amended and claims 11-14 are canceled. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.

I. INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Applicant's attorney would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during a telephone interview on February 27, 2006. During this interview, Applicant's attorney and the Examiner discussed the amendments included in this Amendment after Final as well as the Pal et al. reference.

II. DRAWING OBJECTIONS

In paragraph three of the Office Action, the drawings were objected to. Accordingly, the Specification has been amended and a replacement sheet for FIG. 4 accompanies this response.

III. CLAIM REJECTIONS

In paragraph five of the Office Action, claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Accordingly, claim 3 has been amended such that claims 4 and 5 are definite.

In paragraph six of the Office Action, claims 1-7 and 23-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tangren (US 5,796,553). Claims 1 and 23 are amended in accordance with FIGS. 2-5 and the Specification on page 5, line 1 through page 9, line 4. It is respectfully submitted that Tangren fails to teach or suggest all of the claim elements of independent claims 1 and 23. In particular, Tangren fails to teach or suggest that "the peak strain region is located at least partially on the longitudinal axis" as claimed in claims 1 and 23. In

addition, Tangren also fails to teach or suggest "a strain focusing aperture located within the peak strain region" as claimed in claim 23.

It is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 23 are allowable over the prior art. In addition, it is respectfully submitted that dependent claims 2-7 and dependent claims 24-31 are also in condition for allowance as depending on allowable base claims.

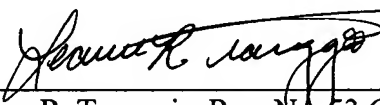
All pending claims 1-10 and 23-31 are in condition for allowance. Favorable action is respectfully requested.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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